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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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SMALLPOX

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SMALLPOX

Before vaccination was so largely practised, smallpox was a common and very fatal disease. Many thousands of persons died from it, and many who recovered were left disfigured for life. Prevention of this disease has been made possible by means of vaccination, which is the only reliable preventive of this disease known.

The virus of smallpox is contained in the skin lesions of those suffering from the disease and is spread from the discharge from these lesions, and all evidence indicates that the disease is also spread from the noses and throats of patients, even before the rash has appeared. It may also be carried indirectly by spoons, towels, handkerchiefs, flies, etc., that have come in contact with a patient.

An individual develops smallpox within fourteen (14) days after exposure to infection. The disease sets in with symptoms similar to "grippe," and these symptoms last usually from three to five days before the rash appears. This rash develops, first as hard pimples, which change to small blisters or blebs, and then into pustules (filled with pus). The pustules gradually dry into scabs which finally drop off.

The (grippe) symptoms followed by a rash described above, are very typical of smallpox but may in mild cases cause no greater illness than a severe cold. Because the symptoms are mild and the rash slight it is no proof that the disease is not smallpox.

Vaccination

Vaccination should be performed by a qualified physician, and if properly performed, and

successful, is sure protection from smallpox. Properly done, vaccination should never cause any harm, provided the lesion is properly cared for. A piece of clean aseptic gauze or soft muslin may be pinned to the sleeve of the undergarment, so as to hang loosely and protect the vaccination pustule, without breaking it, from the possible danger of infection. A shield is not advised.

Vaccination, in a certain percentage of persons, may protect for a lifetime, but it is recommended that it be performed twice at least, during the infancy and when about fifteen (15) years of age. If a person is exposed to smallpox and has not been vaccinated within two years' time, it is recommended that vaccination be again performed.

Many years of experience with smallpox and vaccination prove:

1. That true vaccination, repeated until it no longer takes, always prevents smallpox. Nothing else does.
2. That true vaccination—that is, vaccination properly done on a clean arm with pure lymph, and kept clean and unbroken afterwards until the scab falls off naturally—never did and never will make a serious sore.
3. That such a vaccination leaves a characteristic scar, which may be recognized throughout life and is the only conclusive evidence of successful vaccination.
4. That no untoward results follow such vaccination. On the other hand, thousands of lives have been annually sacrificed through the neglect to vaccinate—a neglect begotten from lack of knowledge.

In order to prevent the spread of this disease, the patient must be strictly isolated from contact with other persons, except the necessary attendants, and all contacts vaccinated as provided for in the Public Health Regulations. All clothes, dressings, etc., soiled with discharge from pustules should be burned; discharge from the mouth and nose should be received on cloths and burned. Proper instructions will be given during the illness by the attending physician, regarding disinfection as provided for by the Regulations.

The house must be placarded.

Patients may only be released from isolation by order of the medical health officer.

Isolation of the patient should be kept for twenty-eight (28) days and until the scabs have fallen off and the scars are completely healed.

Contacts must be successfully vaccinated before release or quarantined for sixteen days.

Disinfection is required before release of the patient and in villages and rural municipalities the attending physician will leave the necessary instructions, but in towns and cities this is the duty of the medical health officer.

Supply of Vaccine free of charge

In order to assist in the prevention of this disease, the Department of Public Health supplies to physicians in the province smallpox vaccine free of charge upon request.

Please assist in eradicating smallpox by being vaccinated.

THOS. H. McCONICA
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